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601, 113, 59, 58, 611, 428

[For information pertaining to the above categories, see 5: Karve AW1 India, category 116, pp. 252-270.]

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endogamous Attikkurissi clan of the Nâyars, who look upon it as the most fitting union.

MARRIAGE.

58 "The haughty nobles and the vulgar race
Never must join the conjugal embrace."
The Lusiad.

656 The common assertion that there is no such thing as marriage amongst the Nâyars, so easily accepted in belief that the Government has been persuaded into a commission to examine the question and to pass an edict entitled "The Malabar Marriage Bill" (which happily fell dead, and is extremely unlikely to effect the customs of the Nâyars and others following the Marumakkattâyam law of inheritance), reminds one of the weary disquisition by people who are dull enough to try and prove that Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another fellow of the same name. No events of life being so realistic to man as marriage and death (to the individual, to the tribe, to the people) shallowness rather than sturdy hardihood of racial character is perhaps indicated when we find any downright change in the ceremonial of marriage, even though it be but some ephemeral divagation and not properly speaking radical change.

175 585 582 837 Buchanan, writing in 1800, tells us that Nâyar girls are married before 10, so that they may not be deflowered by nature, but the husband never afterwards cohabits with his wife. It would not be decent. He allows her this and that, and she lives in her mother's house where she may admit a lover of her own or of a higher caste; the lover giving her a small present; never a large one, which would indicate that she was influenced by mercenary motives. He says the young people vie with each other for favour of the other sex, but that, should a Nâyar man have intimacy with a Tîyan (a lower caste) woman, he is put to death and the woman is sold to the Mâppilas! In the case of the *chère amie* being a slave—presumably of the Cheruman or cognate tribes—both are put to death. If this be true, there were forcible means used in those days for preventing intermixture of the people of the higher and lower castes. Buchanan tells us also that in North Malabar, where as a rule the lady lives in his home, the Nâyar or Nambûtiri lover may put her to death, should she be guilty of infidelity; and he may send her home whenever he pleases.

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184 lives in the house with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that, when her husband dies, she must leave his house and return to her own at once, before his body is carried out. According to the Kêrala Mâhâtmyam the women in North Malabar (should) live with but one man at a time.

● 58 We still, after the manner of children, confound words with things, so it is not surprising that the unfortunate Commission arrived at the conclusion that the institution of marriage was and is entirely absent from the Marumakkattâyam system. "The parties do not plight troth, and do not call God to witness their union." And so forth. But with this conclusion, suitable enough to the high-flown moralist or to the restless beings who would regardlessly sweep away the long results of time and improve on the process of natural development, imposing fanciful arrangements of their own, the anthropologist cannot at all agree. The Sambandham, a regularly formed, and certainly not haphazard alliance between a man and a woman, having the full sanction of the community, is marriage in every sense of the word. If the tâli-tying ceremony gave the girl free liberty, we might well suspect that the Sambandham followed a ceremony,
[848] not a marriage ceremony. But such is by no means the case, for, should the woman who is unmarried, for whom Sambandham has not been arranged, or whose husband, the man with whom she had had Sambandham, is dead—there is no such thing as widowhood,—bear a child, she is disgraced, much as is the Brâhman widow under the same circumstances.

581 What then is the meaning of the assertions of the
585 exponents of the orthodox view that the woman need not be chaste; and so on? The question is not an easy one to answer, but I think we may say with confidence that this orthodox view has been, in some measure, propounded by the Nambûtiris for their own gratification.
[684] I have myself known several tragedies arising out of unfaithfulness, and I believe the old fashioned code of custom admitted the right of the husband to kill his wife's lover if he could, and also to kill his wife. No doubt in a great many cases the pair bound together in Sambandham lead lives ordinarily chaste. I do not, however, think that in actuality such is the rule with either party any more than it is in any other community, and sexual affairs are often treated lightly. With taste and consideration too, Hamilton, who arrived at Calicut in 1702, and spent some twenty odd years on the coast,

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which, 611 simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

001 Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

"A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh [564] month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do [184] class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning; and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important cere- 613 mony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, per- [787] formed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is [824] fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morning of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd*. At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar
Tiyyar

Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambūdiri men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage, which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tāli* was tied by Kolattiri princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambūdiri men, and men, chiefly women of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiars who married almost exclusively with each other, the *tāli*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tāli* should not be tied by an *enangan*, for, polyandry being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayars as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambūdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabar, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambūdiri landlords were few, and many Nayars would have to call for the rite Nambūdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

Similarly, the *tāli*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, if we are to believe informants, the Koil Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tāli*-rite and assist at other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar *tāli*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyyars.

Part III. The Tiyyar Kinship System and *Tāli*-Rite in North Malabar

The Tiyyars farm land leased on short-term tenures from Nayars and live in the low-caste quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayars, they were organized into *taras*, the hereditary headman (Tandan) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for the administration of caste law among Tiyyars and the lower castes.[1]

Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washermen (Vaṇṇāns, called Mannāns in the south) and barbers (Kāvutiyyans, called Vāṭṭhis in the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grandchildren of the sisters. The Tiyyars, like the Nayars, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

Tiyyars, like Nayars, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayars, Tiyyar men, having little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from Nayars near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the *local* descent-group, persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden,

[1] I have no information on the *enangu* institution of North Malabar Tiyyars. Dr Aiyappan's (1944, *passim*) discussion of the Tiyyar *enangu* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyyars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyyars of South Malabar. In Kottayam informants did not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
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588 coconut in half, returned amid music, and entered the middle room. The barber woman dressed her and threw rice on her head.

[604] The girl's mother's brother's wife then carried a plank of the milk tree into the marriage [782] shed, walked round with it three times, and placed it on a mat over rice and paddy. The Tandan of the local group must be present to witness the rites. The mother's brother's wife and other women, or in some areas the *kāranavan*, led out the girl who, with her face hidden by a cloth, walked three times round and sat on the plank. The barber man instructed her to perform an offering of rice and water to the household lamp and the post supporting the south-east corner of the shed, which had previously been set up by the carpenter with ceremonies at an auspicious time. The girl threw more rice to the cardinal points, the earth, and the sky. Gold and silver coins, salt, rice, paddy, turmeric, charcoal, and pieces of old cadjan leaf from the house-thatch were then tied separately in leaves and placed in a mud pot. The mouth of [789] the pot was covered with a leaf and tied with string. The girl sprinkled rice over the pot, broke a hole in the lid, and picked out one of the articles, which was examined as an augur of her destiny and of the number of children she would bear. She then twisted off a coconut from a bunch hanging at the corner of the shed. Each of her relatives threw a new cloth over her head. Half of the cloths were given to the barber, who at this point uncovered the girl's face and head and poured coconut water from a leaf of the pipal tree on to a silver and a copper coin which he had placed upon her head. Her *kāranavan* asked the astrologer if the auspicious time had arrived, after which the barber woman handed the *tāli* to the mother's brother's wife who tied it round the girl's neck. The barber womaff poured water on the girl's hands: this she threw upwards three times and once each to the cardinal points. A lit cotton wick, steeped in oil, was twisted round a rod of bamboo stuck in a young coconut. The girl was required to look at the sun and at this wick. She then walked three times round a coconut tree in the garden, pouring water at its root. This concluded the ceremonies. Unfortunately, I have no record of whether the girl was further secluded after the rites were over.

[604] Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, I, p. 288) reports that the *tāli* was tied 'either by the [582] maternal or paternal aunt or by the would-be mother-in-law, if the husband for her has already been selected'. All of these kinswomen (mother's brother's wife, father's sister and husband's mother) are real or potential mothers-in-law because of cross-cousin marriage. My own informants and also Aiyappan state that the rite included an initiation into cookery: the girl was made to grind condiments on a grindstone and to pretend to cook milk porridge before the *tāli* was tied. Aiyappan reports that the barber woman instructed her, and at the end said: 'Prepare sweet porridge, give it to father and mother, and to me, and keep what remains in the *uri*' (a rope support to keep vessels suspended).

This initiation rite, while, like the Nayar one, symbolizing the girl's attainment of maturity and her passage to the status of a married woman, is adapted to the occupation and kinship of Tiyyars. It is significant that to attain 'wifehood' a Tiyyar girl must grind condiments and make porridge:– a foreshadowing of her domestic duties as wife.

588 The mother's brother's wife and the father's sister are preferred mothers-in-law for a
582 Tiyyar girl. The fact that either could be replaced by the actual prospective mother-in-law if the girl were already betrothed proves that they acted in the rite as potential mothers-in-law. The mother's brother's wife is of course suited to become a girl's mother-in-law in a matrilineal system which recognizes strong paternal claims (see Fortes 1953, p. 200). Marriage of her son to her husband's niece mitigates the proverbial conflict between cross-cousins, while cementing the relationship between father and son who frequently live together and co-operate in cultivation. The father's sister's claim is equally strong. In this marriage the boy commonly returns to his mother's brother in his natal house, the girl remaining in her paternal [593] house where she has been brought up. The matrilineal cross-cousin marriage of a man is

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7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955 AWII Kerala AWII
Tiyyar

likeliest if his lineage is wealthier than his father, his parents divorced or his *kāraṇavan* sonless. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is likeliest if the father has no personal property to leave to his son, if the father has no nephews, or if the husband has quarrelled with his *kāraṇavan*.

The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband, seen in the *tāli*-rite, must be met at the later marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack, formerly with a sword. He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested.

The tying of the *tāli* by a potential mother-in-law foreshadows the later role of the wife as a subordinate who performs menial tasks under her guidance. Nayar women in North Malabar, too, do housework under the mother-in-law's supervision and customarily behave submissively to her. But their work is not obligatory, and a Nayar wife may decide to live for long periods in her *taravāḍ* and receive her husband there; unless she denies him sexual rights this will not be seen as adequate grounds for divorce. Though the system is nominally matrilineal, a Tiyyar wife lacks this privilege. At marriage, the payments of dowry and earnest money transfer the rights in her domestic services to her husband's group and place on them the burden of her maintenance. Her desertion would therefore be grounds for divorce by the husband.

In my Kottayam village the barber woman, as well as conducting the 'cooking' rites, tied the *tāli* herself. Informants stated that the *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife, or prospective mother-in-law) must be present; they knew, moreover, that in some areas she tied the *tāli*. They were unable to explain this difference of custom. Among Tiyyar washermen and barbers themselves, the *tāli* was tied by an old man of the caste not previously related to the girl.

The North Malabar Tiyyar woman's *tāli* may therefore be tied by her prospective mother-in-law, by a woman of a lower, polluting caste or (among barbers and washermen) by a respected elder of the community. It is difficult to find a sociological explanation of why these three persons should be regarded as comparable, i.e. capable of fulfilling the role of initiating girls into womanhood. In the case of the mother-in-law, we have seen that other facts about Tiyyar kinship to some extent explain the form of the rite. Even here, however, it is difficult to explain why it is necessary at all. To what end must a girl observe mock menstrual seclusion before she has menstruated? To what end must she go through a form of marriage, carried out by her prospective mother-in-law, a barber woman, or an elderly man, before she is of age to marry? I revert to these questions after describing the Tiyyar ceremony in South Malabar and Cochin.

Part IV. The Tiyyar Kinship System and *Tāli*-Rite in South Malabar and Cochin

Here, as in the north, Tiyyars rank below Nayars as the highest 'polluting' caste and are tenant-farmers and coconut-growers. But in this area they have, like the other lower castes above serfs, localized, named patrilineal lineages comparable in size and distribution with the matrilineal lineages of the north. The lineage is exogamous; it has a depth of about five to seven generations; is united by the observance of pollutions, by the worship of patrilineal ancestors, of a lineage-god and of snakes, and is sometimes subdivided into property-groups three to five generations deep. The lineage, like the North Malabar Tiyyar and the Nayar matrilineage, is called a *taravāḍ*.

The internal organization of the local caste group of the *tara* was similar to North Malabar, with a hereditary headman (Tandan) whose powers derived from the *desavari*. The *enangar* relationship was remembered by my informants, though it began to die out about twenty years ago. Each lineage had a single *enangar* lineage through which it was linked to the group. *Enangar* obligations were reciprocal and exclusive. Tiyyar *enangar*, moreover, unlike Nayar,

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll

105 564 581 428 the Nambudri Act of 1933, the provisions of which are that younger Nambudris may marry women of their own caste and that the *illam* property can be divided, if they so wish, and inherited by these younger sons.

105 564 611 Others who observe *makkathayam* in Kerala are the south Malabar and north Cochin Thandans, the Kammalans and their associated fellow artisans and craftsmen, all the agrarian serfs and the aboriginals, the south Malabar Moslem Moplas, the Christians and the Jews.

Marumakkathayam, on the other hand, is practised by Kshattriyas, Samantans, Ambalavasis, Nayars, north Malabar Tiyas, south Travancore Iruvas and north Malabar as well as Laccadive Moplas. In the [428] case of the Mohammedans, a distinction should be made in matters of inheritance, family property (that is of the *tarawad*) being handed on through the female line alone, while self-acquisitions of the father are [192] passed on directly to his male heirs. A visit to the Makhdun Tangal of [115] Ponani, the senior Islamic religious authority in Kerala, which I made on the 24th of November, 1949, allowed me to confirm this. Originally from the Hedjaz, Sayed Mohammed Ben Mustafa Haidaros told me that this was an adaptation of Koranic law to the customs of the country and had been introduced many years back with the coming of his ancestors to the south-west coast of India.

105 564 [58] Marriage in Kerala is an arranged affair, parents or a close relative such as the maternal uncle, choosing a suitable partner for the child after the age of puberty. Once the two families involved have agreed as to what shall be paid in bride price and in dowry, the wedding is celebrated publicly with religious rites and with an appropriate display of festive spending. This is the general rule insofar as marriage within [588] the caste is concerned. Intercaste relations are, however, far from rare, and their existence has been regularized and institutionalized in a form of sexual union, mentioned above, and known as *sambandham*.

105 564 588 By this arrangement, which appears to conform to a general principle of hypergamy in Kerala, men of a higher caste are permitted to consort with women of a lower one, without incurring any of the obligations towards wife and children which they would have if they had been regularly wed. Greatly facilitating this is the fact that *sambandham* unions [428] usually take place with women of those people who follow *marumakkathayam*, for in this way, the offspring which they may have will belong to their caste and are cared for by and inherit from the maternal uncle.

Sambandham used to be the usual way in which younger Nambudri sons enjoyed the privilege of taking Nayar women to themselves and

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Kerala AW11

Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons took their "names" from their father and daughters from their mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and practice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough (1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Mapilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that, leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal *taravads*, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous* group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifications are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla also follow the Nambudiri–Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names